



Natomas Oral Histories

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Oral interview of

Virginia Fitzpatrick Harris

during a driving tour of Natomas
with Margaret Inderkum Clark

August 6, 2006

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This is not a verbatim transcript. Parts of the interview have been paraphrased.

Anne: Today is Sunday, August 6, 2006, and I am looking forward to talking with Virginia Fitzpatrick Harris. We're starting here at Jack's Doughnut Wheel on Northgate Boulevard. So, I'm a little early. It is 10 to 9 — we're supposed to meet at 9, so we'll see if this all comes down smoothly. I turned on my cell. Hopefully this will happen.

Anne: So, Virginia and I have driven down the Garden Highway. We've driven past the Blue Gecko, the Chevy's over there, and we're sitting in front of the wharf. Virginia has already said that Zubiri — what did you say his first name was?

[00:00:51]

Virginia: Mike Zubiri.

Anne: Mike Zubiri. We already passed his land, and she called him the Spanish—

Virginia: The Spanish farmer.

Anne: The Spanish farmer, ok.

Virginia: Yes, because he was Spanish, from Spain.

Anne: Ok, and he was a bachelor and he had some money.

Virginia: Yes

Anne: Ok. His place was on the right *[land side of the Garden Highway]*. So, we have a new company that is out over there now, which I don't remember the name of. But, a big nice place. They've landscaped it and everything; that must have been the Zubiri property then. Ok, so now Virginia, you were going to say — we see this place where they're fixing boats.

Virginia: Yes.

Anne: It's kind of a yacht company here on the right. But, you're recognizing the barn—

Virginia: Yes. The barn was the Natomas barn when I was living close by here. I always called this the company house on Bannon Slough.

Anne: Ok

Virginia: That's right. But anyway, the tin barn was owned by the Natomas Company and my father was the weighmaster. He used to weigh in the trucks with the barrels of hay and then charge them to store the hay in the Natomas barn.

Anne: That was the barn?

Virginia: Yes.

Anne: The weighmaster's thing was—

Virginia: Right there, Yes.

Anne: Ok.

Virginia: Remember the picture I showed you?

Anne: Yes.

Virginia: So it was about there.

Anne: It was prior to where the pump is now.

Virginia: No, the pump was there, too. In the picture, you look past the pump house to the weighmaster's shed.

Anne: Oh, ok I didn't recognize I was looking in this direction.

Virginia: Yes, you were looking out about here.

Anne: Oh.

[00:02:40]

Virginia: As I said, my father would come and open up the scales, weigh the trucks, and charge them. Then here, I'm looking at — they tore down the house we lived in. I haven't been out here for a long time.

Anne: I'm going to take a photo.

Virginia: Ok.

Anne: You are telling me that the photo you gave us before was in that direction.

Virginia: Yes.

Anne: I'm going to take a photo in that direction, over toward where the barn is now. I'm looking in a northeasterly direction.

Virginia: When I was talking about "the house on the hill," this was the house that I was referring to.

Anne: Ok.

Virginia: So it is pretty large. Even by today's standards.

Anne: That is an interesting comment. I never thought about it as large, but here we are. In front of the RD 1000, 1633 Garden Highway. It is fairly large.

Virginia: Yes.

Anne: I kept thinking that all that back part was just added on later, and that it was just this part here.

Virginia: Well, it could have been. I'm not sure. You may remember, Anne, in my write up I talked about the earlier function of this house. The earlier superintendents of the Reclamation District — I'm a little confused — earlier on, they worked for the Natomas Company.

Anne: Right.

Virginia: Then the Reclamation District was formed. I don't know just how all that happened. I remember the first superintendent. His name, I believe, was Fitzpatrick as well.

Anne: Oh, ok.

Virginia: Then the one that was there, that lived there the most, was Vale, Louie Vale. He and his wife and child. Her name was Marian. We used to have a couple of school picnics at their house. They had a lovely lawn. She was very gracious, and nice. Bob Christophel and I used to visit with her. She had books on opera. She would treat us very nicely. She had a Chow named Tusha.

Anne: That is so wonderful. *[Laughter]*

Virginia: So well-treated. He was like her child.

Anne: You wrote that she would make stews and things. *[Laughter]* You can imagine, he was her child. Except, she was treating you guys, also. Took in neighborhood kids to give nice opportunities, experiences to.

Virginia: We were always on good behavior.

Anne: Of course.

[00:05:27]

Virginia: This is the pumping plant that my father operated. Of course, this is where I lived in a house — I'm not sure if it's still there or not, we'll have to see — from age 7 until about age 14.

Anne: You think it's down here?

Virginia: The house was down here. But is it gone?

Anne: Well, probably, because, look, this is all a new subdivision.

Virginia: Oh dear. They tore it down. We can't get in back there. This used to have sloping lawns, sloping driveway. Our little company house — my father always lived in company houses, and he lived there

until he retired. My father was Phillip Fitzpatrick, as you know. He ran the pumping plant and he was the weighing master, and later on he became the superintendent, but he never moved into the house of the superintendent. He just stayed on in this house.

Anne: Oh, ok. So this was the location.

Virginia: Right.

Anne: I'm going to get a picture of this location.

Virginia: There used to be pomegranate trees and we used to ride our bikes down here. Remember when I spoke of Joe Borghese, the workman who lived in the shack here?

Anne: Yes, yes.

Virginia: His shack was just about where that fence is over there.

Anne: Oh really. Where would your house have been? It would have been down where that tree is. See the big tree? That would have been our trees, sitting on this side of it.

Anne: Ok.

Virginia: Then there is the picture of the tree — I'm not sure if that tree would still be there or not. It would be very large if it was.

Anne: I was trying to remember. Wasn't it an evergreen tree in that picture?

Virginia: Yes, it was.

Anne: I'm not really seeing an evergreen there.

Virginia: These plain trees here, there was a tree like that in front of our house. I have a few on—

Anne: That's probably those trees.

[00:07:36]

Virginia: I don't know how long they live. This structure, whatever that is, some sort of utility structure, blocks the view of the house.

Anne: Ok.

Virginia: We can't get in there so—

Anne: We can't get in there so we have to take a picture from here. Oh, it is interesting to me that I can actually see the top of that barn, the blue lettering. So yes, the picture you gave us shows faintly the building behind it. I can't really get to the very same spot, though, can I?

Virginia: It was taken from behind the pump house up that way, taken because of the flood, I guess.

Anne: Oh. So, I have to take my picture a little bit more to the south on the opposite of the pump than what that original picture was taken.

Virginia: Right.

Anne: I'm just going to run out and do this a minute. Maybe we want to pause this right here.

Anne: The trees we see back there were in front of your place.

Virginia: Yes, they were the trees in the front yard. We used to climb on them as kids. Beyond that were the Christophel orchards. I'm trying to remember. They were nicely divided. There were different kinds of cherries and other — pears, cherries, and peaches. Bings were over this way and Royal Anne's that came in later. There was a seasonal rhythm of the orchards.

Anne: Wow!

Virginia: This was the new Christophel house.

Anne: Oh, so this house right here. Oh my goodness, 1635.

Virginia: Yes. Their original house was down Garden (Orchard) Lane.

Anne: I'm going to go down Orchard Lane

Virginia: Orchard Lane, right. This was the Freitas place. What happened to that house?

Anne: 1715, approximately, you're saying was where the Freitas house was.

Virginia: Their second house.

Anne: Second house, oh my gosh.

Virginia: After the war, people had money to spend so they built new houses.

Anne: We've now just turned on Orchard Lane. People have second houses, wow.

Virginia: Yes. They have pent-up wealth, I guess.

[00:10:10]

Anne: I'm turning on Trigo Way and go over here, down to Jicama and point out to you where David Christophel and Marin bought property that was on their family's land after it was subdivided. I don't think they are living here anymore. They said they moved out to the country — whether they have sold the house or whether they are just keeping it for later. This is where David and Maren raised their kids. 31 Jicama. The oldest daughter was my son James' age.

Virginia: Oh, I see.

Anne: So, Callie and James were friends. This was all Christophel land here.

Virginia: Yes. When I think about it, it looks like they chose a house that was closest to the original land.

Anne: Yes. They lived in that original family house before it was sold and torn down.

Virginia: His mother would have been Joan then, right?

Anne: I don't remember if his mother's name was Joan. It would have been Bill's first wife, right?

Virginia: I believe her name was Joan. I knew of them.

Anne: Now here is a big tree. This is where the orchard was. You're right, at the back of their property.

Virginia: Here was the Christophel house. I'm sure that oak was there. Then you remember the barns were here. This is the fruit stand that they had. Riverview Orchards. No vestiges left. It's all gone.

Anne: What does the sign say here? 2760 Riverview Ranch. What does this one say? Sally Hudson Park. Ah, I must say, I didn't know where that park was.

Virginia: I don't know who Sally Hudson was.

Anne: I think she got cancer. I'm guessing the Christophel family must have been pretty connected with her. She was a community activist, that I know.

Virginia: Oh, ok. She was after my time, is that right?

Anne: Yes. I think it was before my time.

[00:13:01]

Virginia: Yes. Now when we went to school, we went that way.

Anne: Yes. We can continue down here. Let me tell the tape recorder: We're continuing on Orchard Lane. Here is Euphrasia Court, so Mary Euphrasia. Do you know her, that name?

Virginia: No.

Anne: Ok. She is a sister to Dee Barandas, who was a Ferreira.

Virginia: Oh, yes.

Anne: Here is our middle school now. This is Leroy Greene Middle School.

Virginia: Oh, Leroy F. Greene.

Anne: I said it right. Here it says, "Leroy F. Greene Middle School." Then—

Virginia: Do you know where Jefferson School was?

Anne: Yes.

Virginia: You know that I attended there. I always get excited—

Anne: I can imagine you are. I'm going to orient you again. Look here a minute — see Barandas, they named a road after the Barandas family, even though they said their land wasn't here. Right straight ahead used to be the Perry Ranch (Pereira).

Virginia: Oh, yes.

Anne: Right? This was all was taken out. It was here a long time after I moved here. In the '80s, '90s, but then more recently, they up and took the whole thing and moved it down to El Centro. That is where the Perry Ranch is now, on more of their property. The reason I'm turning this way is because I want to show you the new Manuel Barandas Park.

Virginia: Oh.

Anne: They just dedicated it. We are now turned right on West El Camino heading east and we're just going to pop over a minute to where the dedication of the Manuel Barandas Park site is.

Virginia: Oh.

Anne: Now we're going to come up to the canal too. You'll have more familiarity with the canal that ran behind your house.

Virginia: Oh, yes.

Anne: It ran out this way.

Virginia: Maybe we could shut this off?

Anne: Ok, sure.

[00:15:46]

Anne: Now we've turned onto this road, I forgot to check what the name of the road is. See "Manuel J. Barandas Park, City of Sacramento, Department of Parks and Recreation." They just dedicated it. Two weeks ago, approximately. We were all out here. There was a very nice dedication of this park. Do you remember anything about this area?

Virginia: I remember visiting the Pereira girls, and Joaquin Pereira. I guess that's back in that era when it was the Perry Ranch. It was all fields. We walked through the field to get up to their house. I'm lost here. We used to take a row boat to go down the canal. It was quite wild and primitive. There's the canal. There was nothing around it that I remember.

Anne: We've gone back now onto West El Camino, heading west. We've got to make our way around (to San Juan Road where Jefferson School was. They have put I-5 in here. Actually, this is 80 (the old 880). I-5 is up a way yet. We're going to head around and get ourselves up by the Truck Stop. Was the Truck Stop there when you were out here?

Virginia: No.

Anne: Ok, that was later than your childhood. Ok. Sometime I'll have to do a historical society exhibit on the life of the Truck Stop, because it also has been out here for a while.

Virginia: I remember in the late '70s, I had a friend that lived in a manufactured home park there, down the road from the Truck Stop. The Truck Stop has been there a long time.

Anne: It has been there a long time. Yes.

Virginia: I would have stopped living in Natomas around 1949.

Anne: Oh, ok. That was the year you would have stopped. That was the year I was born. *[Laughter]* So I wasn't out here then, and you were leaving. Now we're connecting. I love it. *[Laughter]*

[00:19:12]

Anne: *[After the Truck Stop nearing El Centro, looking to the left]* See that little house down the road?

Virginia: Yes.

Anne: Do you know about the people that lived there?

Virginia: What were their names?

Anne: Machado. What were their names?

Virginia: I remember the Machado name. Wow, it's still standing!

Anne: Yes. That is the Machados'.

Virginia: It looks familiar.

Anne: Ok. We can go past it if you want to.

Virginia: That would be fun.

Anne: Good, we can do that. Look at that road they named Tomato Patch Lane. Dee Greenslate, the person who does the Portuguese Culture and Historical Society, is going to try to get me in over here, 2651 to talk with he and his wife. I'm not good at their names right now. I want to say Anna and is it Frank Senior?

Virginia: Is this their land?

Anne: I think it's mostly sold now. I'll show you as we head over here. Now we're heading north again, passing the safflower fields, with sunflowers dotted in the middle of them. I don't know what else was here. I don't know all my crops yet.

Virginia: Ah! I remember tomato fields.

Anne: Ok. Well, Tomato Patch Lane, that was named rightly, huh?

Virginia: Yes. Now the school was on what is now called El Centro?

[00:21:50]

Anne: No. It was on San Juan. We're going to get to San Juan as we go down here. What you are going to notice, is this machinery company, a couple of other things that were down here. We'll also see a chunk of cement that is left of the Machado property. It says 1917 Machado; we'll see that on the right. But on the left all these ads, the sign "Perry's." It used to be over there on West El Camino. So many people come here, to the Perry Farm. There, look. "Machado, since 1917."

Virginia: Oh my goodness! Yes.

Anne: This was all Machado land.

Virginia: Oh.

Anne: This is the Costa house.

Virginia: Oh.

Anne: This green one [*on the left*] is the Costas'. Certainly there are nieces and nephews living there now.

Virginia: So this was Emily and Manuel's home.

Anne: Ok. 2201 El Centro.

Virginia: It was where Ronny and his brother, Ted, and there is another one who's name I can't remember.

Anne: Yes. I can't remember either at the moment. We are going to turn right, onto San Juan. I'm pausing, because we still have this little old house on the corner on the right (left). Somebody said Silva had this place. I don't know. These Portuguese names — there are lots of Silvas.

Virginia: Yes. Well, Donalda would know that.

Anne: If it was her family. I don't think it was her family, rather another Silva.

Virginia: Now we're headed — now I'm getting my bearings. The levee — so, the school's right up here.

Anne: Yes. It's going to be coming up here. [*On the left*] See here the sign says, "Witter Road."

Virginia: Yes, and there it was. Right there.

Anne: Here is water, a canal. I'll park across the street.

[00:25:09]

Virginia: This was probably where — remember when I drew on the diagram, the teachers' garage? There was a teachers' garage here. The teachers would come in the morning and park here. There was a gate they would come through that was here.

Anne: Ok. We have this gate, right?

Virginia: Yes, we do have a gate, but it wasn't the gate that was here though.

Anne: Oh, ok.

Virginia: It was on the side of San Juan there. It was the gate you came in through the front.

Anne: We're going to drive over there and park over there. Ok. We'll have you stand with the gate. We'll locate it at what looks like what might have been in the same direction the gate might have been in.

Virginia: Yes. I can see here now the side of the school. This is where the garage was. Then the school property took up some of where that house is. The school was back a way and faced, of course, the road. This was the gravel play yard, kind of sandy, it didn't have grass. That went all the way around the back. That was the whole play area. It had kind of a cyclone fence in the back. I imagine with kids next to a canal — I never heard anyone express any concerns. The school was right there.

Anne: Behind you, you can see the Witter Ranch in all those trees.

Virginia: The Witter house isn't there?

Anne: Yes.

Virginia: It is there?

Anne: Yes.

Virginia: I'd like to see that.

Anne: Ok. We'll go over there. I never know if they're home.

[00:27:17]

Virginia: All the trees are gone here. I wonder — maybe they just were not long-life trees. Three trees in the front with benches around them, where the kids used to eat their lunch. I would say that the gate would be probably about here. On that side was kind of a garden area, and as I said, during the war years, the boys would till a victory garden out there.

Anne: That is so good!

Virginia: We, the girls, would knit squares for an afghan to send to the troops — looking out the window, as the passive little woman that I would turn out to be, watching the men, and boys in training to be men, outside sweating in the sun.

Anne: I'll take my camera, turn this off — we'll go out and take a picture with the gate.

Virginia: All right. I remember the garage was here. The teachers would drive out from town. It seems to be they sometimes brought separate cars. I'm not sure about that. It was Mrs. Mack and she had a son

named Charles. He didn't attend school here. Mrs. Thomas was the principal. She had a son named Gifford, who attended school here.

Anne: I'm so glad you have that picture. You showed me which one he is.

Virginia: Yes. I remember pledging allegiance every morning when they took the flag. We would all stand and put our hands on our hearts. They didn't have "under God" at that time — it was added later. We would sing war songs. Mrs. Thomas would play the piano. She would pound out on that piano and we would sing "Anchors Aweigh," "Go into the Wild Blue Yonder," and various songs. They had crafts that we made. Premade boxes that we painted to make jewelry boxes — I remember that well. It was fun! We did wood burning. Wood burning was something that was done. That's all I really remember as far as the crafts. There probably were other ones.

[00:30:12]

Anne: Do you remember anything about plays? They did a play every winter or something?

Virginia: You know, I remember performances around holidays. I remember the Valentine's Day play. There would be a very ornate box that we would create, with valentines on it. Then we would sing a valentine song. I remember that.

Anne: Now here's the Witter Ranch. The house is still there. This vantage point isn't the best vantage point. Ed and Eleanor still live here.

Virginia: That is the son of—

Anne: One of the sons, right?

Virginia: There was Bob and Ed. Bob went to school at Jefferson. The younger brother. Ed — I do remember coming here one time, maybe there were other times, but I remember Mrs. Witter. She was quite lovely. She looked like Mary Astor, a famous actress.

Anne: We have a lovely photo of them in a field by a tomato truck. She is all dressed "citified." She looked very lovely. Fond thoughts and comments. You can see the rabbit in the middle of the field over there with the ears up.

Virginia: A natural way. I remember being inside this house. There was a kind of great room with a roaring fire in the fireplace. It seems like maybe we did marshmallows? I don't know just what the occasion was. There were others there. I remember Bob Christophel. I would come back sometime and stay with my father. Bob Christophel got, later on — had a really bad accident. He ran a jeep into this canal. He was laid up for a long time.

Anne: Oh my. Now we are coming to the school from the other end, going south now on Witter Road.

Virginia: Right. The school was really a nice school, I think. It was fair and structured.

Anne: Taught you at your level? Challenged you?

Virginia: Well, it was — they were really good teachers. I really respected them.

Anne: That is so nice.

Virginia: Although, I have to say, Gifford was a little mean to me sometimes. *[Laughter]*

Anne: The teacher's son. Hard to have your own son there.

[00:33:34]

Virginia: Yes, that would be hard. I saw Mrs. Mack many years later at a reunion of some kind. I'm sure she's gone. She was a very — like an Englishwoman. She dressed in tweeds and twill. She was very nice.

Anne: Now we are heading back, west, on San Juan. I'll have to make a decision — if we want to go to the right of here, which would then bring us over to where the Natomas Union School was, on Del Paso. Or, if we need to go straight—

Virginia: We're going to go straight. The Costa house helped me get my bearings. We are going to go straight to find my old house.

Anne: We're crossing El Centro.

Virginia: We used to be able to walk to the school, I remember. I don't remember who else was walking with me. There must have been other kids that lived in this direction. The kids of work men, people who were working here. I'm not sure. I remember their last name was Goodnight. Meryl was one of them — a brother, I don't remember his name. I think they used to walk with us. When I'm looking here, this is quite a distance. We used our very own legs to get ourselves there. There used to be a lot of mustard green fields. I remember Meryl and I, or one of them, sitting out and chewing on mustard greens. It was quite fun! *[Laughter]*

Anne: Now we have safflower. I think that is what this field is.

Virginia: I remember we would find killed animals on the roadside.

Anne: Now see, because this area — I wonder if there was a house there at one time. See that plateau there in the field.

Virginia: Huh, yes. It seems like there was a house out there at one time. I don't remember specifically. I'm surprised all that I don't remember while I'm out here, in terms of what was here then. I have a sense there wasn't much!

Anne: Yes.

[00:36:24]

Virginia: There was a pump on the corner of El Centro and San Juan. We used to think of it as a pumphouse. It was a landmark that I remember.

Anne: I remember that there was a pumphouse there. You are pointing to the right. You want us to go right. Ok, we are at 3190 Garden Highway at this point.

Virginia: Right. Yes. Let me see now. I hope the Riverside house is still here. For all I know, it isn't. It did have a pumping plant with it. Then there was a house on the other side of the Inderkum Dairy. The dairy was on this side *[right]* farther down that way. Where is — I'm going to feel sad if that house is gone. My goodness.

Anne: Let me get my phone out here. Do you know anything about those farms or that house back there?

Virginia: I'm trying to — first I have to get my bearings. I can't believe they would be doing without the pumping plant. Maybe I should shut this off while we look.

Anne: Alright.

Virginia: We are picking up Margaret (Inderkum Clark). 4007 Garden Highway.

Anne: Yes. We have Margaret Clark with us now. We're so excited. We're going up, up—

Margaret: No we're going south.

Anne: I thought we were going north. I get myself so disoriented here.

Margaret: The sun comes up this way — that's east.

Virginia: Down here, then, Margaret says that the pumping plant that my father used to run and the house we lived in from the time that I was 3 or 4 until I was 7 — where is it Margaret?

Margaret: We're not there yet. We're passing this big pink mansion.

Anne: Am I going to turn into it?

Margaret: No, just keep going. This guy's son built this house, on the knoll. A swimming pool out here in the back, the Sankey house—

Virginia: The old swimming hole? Oh my goodness!

Margaret: Well this guy is the son. The mother and father—

Virginia: That was the old pool? Oh my goodness! We were down a ways.

Margaret: A little bit further.

[00:40:00]

Virginia: It was a lovely big home, though. We would come and swim in that pool. I'll be darned. There's just vestiges of it. That was many years ago. I'm 72 years old, so that was a while.

Margaret: They used to gamble at night in this back room *[laughter]*. They gambled big up here.

Virginia: This isn't the house.

Margaret: No, the house is gone. They knocked it down to build—

Virginia: Oh the house is gone.

Anne: Not your house—

Margaret: Yes, the Sankey house is gone.

Virginia: Oh, the Sankey house.

Margaret: Over here, here is the orchard. The old house is still back there. They had a girl back there about Susie's age. She and Susie died just weeks apart.

Virginia: I can't quite get my bearings. Where is the pumping plant?

Margaret: One house to go.

Anne: Margaret knows all this stuff.

Virginia: I know she does.

Margaret: Now look at the next place. See these green weeds — we're at the top of the driveway.

Virginia: Oh, oh, there's the house! Oh my goodness.

Margaret: See them?

Anne: That is where you used to live?

Virginia: That's where I lived. It used to have a walkway out here. You used to walk—

Anne: Let me see that picture. I've heard about the Riverside Pump, but have never seen it.

[00:41:55]

Virginia: I used to play under that walkway all the time. I'm going to shut this off just for one second. We're at the Riverside Pump Plant. The house still standing that I lived in from age — what did I say, 3 until about 6 or 7. Until just before the war. The pumping plant used to have a walkway from the pump to the road. It was a different color.

Margaret: Yes, they painted it.

Virginia: The house was quite pretty then. We used to eat dinner out on the back porch. One memory I have is of the river rising and trapping our car down below. *[Laughter]*

Margaret: Yes, Harley has a car. It was under water at one point.

Virginia: Yes. I had a duck. His name was Dr. Quack.

Anne: Oh. There's ducks over there still.

Virginia: There was a little pond. It was quite nice. Unfortunately, Dr. Quack came to a bad end. Somebody accidentally dropped some poison feed to kill gophers. He ate it and—

Margaret: Used to go up and down the highway killing squirrels—

Virginia: Right, right. It was quite beautiful then. The grass was very nice. Across the water, the house is still standing, surrounded by an orchard. I had a childhood friend that lived there. Her name was Joyce Sebold [*unsure of spelling*]. The Sebold family lived there for a time. Joyce was 4 or 5 years older than I. Joyce, was a dwarf.

Anne: So interesting.

Virginia: Yes.

[00:44:33]

Anne: We're at 3771 Garden Highway.

Virginia: The Riverside Pumping Plant.

Anne: Yes. I've never noticed that before.

Margaret: You only see some of these places when the leaves are off the trees.

Virginia: Yes.

Anne: Or, when we have somebody like you who can point them out.

Margaret: When the trees are full, you can't see nothing. We had that historical society tour. It was useless coming in the summer time. You couldn't see half the houses.

Anne: Right.

Virginia: We had several times people swimming the river from Woodland or whatever is on that side.

Virginia: Margaret, I was talking about remembering the bridge that went into town.

Margaret: They have a freeway now.

Anne: There is a house down in there. Do you know anybody that lived there?

Margaret: Sweeny's. Were you there when they were there?

Virginia: No.

Margaret: Well they left.

Anne: 3551 (Garden Highway)

Margaret: Japanese people live there.

Anne: Land side.

Margaret: Kawamura.

Anne: What was her name? Kawamura?

Margaret: I don't know if they're still there. That was back a ways.

Anne: Ok.

Virginia: I'm going to shut this off.

Anne: Ok

[00:46:25]

Virginia: What I remember about Mr. Truxel was that he — when I was a little girl, he wore a leather pouch over his hand, so you couldn't see it. There was something wrong with it. I never did see his hand. Did you?

Margaret: No, not really. I know he didn't have his fingers or something.

Virginia: He was little.

Margaret: He wasn't too big a man, a small man.

Virginia: Not very heavy. I remember when I was a little kid, my father kept two houses out in the district. We lived in that other house. We used to go over there. They had a big cookhouse. We had the best food. We were too poor to have butter. All we ate was margarine. I embarrassed my mother by yelling, I want more cheese. I'd never seen butter before. *[Laughter]* They had these wonderful meals. That's where they—

TAPE SIDE 2

Margaret: It must be where the firehouse is now.

Anne: That's what I'm thinking.

Margaret: I don't remember at all where it was. Why did you call it Camp 8 anyway?

Virginia: I don't know.

Anne: Well, what I know, on the 1921 map they have them numbered. This one #1, this one #2.

Virginia: Oh. Well, that makes sense.

Anne: So they could identify where people were and what was happening at each site.

Virginia: They had workmen dispatched to different places—

Anne: Yes. They would say, “Go clean up the tules at camp 8.”

Virginia: Yes. So many people don’t know what tules are.

Anne: That’s right.

Virginia: Did you know what tules were?

Anne: I didn’t know until I came out here. I learned because of Native Americans.

Virginia: Is that right?

Anne: Right. Diana Almendariz (Southern Maidu, Nisenan speaking) lives in Natomas. She creates boats and other kinds of things that they used to use the tules for.

[00:48:51]

Virginia: Ah, I see. These irrigation canals and ditches would get so choked up with tules. They had to have the workmen come out with these big scythes and they would work like slaves.

Margaret: The ditch on the left side of the highway — first time I’ve ever seen them cleaning ditches. I don’t know how many men. That’s where I learned to swim. In that little old irrigation ditch. *[Laughter]* Now they have swimming pools.

Anne: That’s right. The parents are worried that if they let them go in the irrigation ditches — too many chemicals.

Virginia: Right.

Margaret: Well they didn’t hurt us in our day.

Virginia: I remember a total uncaring about DDT. I remember when we lived up in the house by the Bannon Slough, they would just inundate those orchards with DDT spray. Us kids would be out there just covered with DDT and nobody gave it a thought. I remember my eyes swelled up.

Anne: Oh really!

Virginia: They never even took me to the doctor.

Margaret: We never went to the doctor. We didn’t have any money for a doctor. *[Laughter]*

Virginia: They took you to the dentist when you had a toothache. I always wondered if my dad’s lymphoma came from all the time he was living in the pesticides.

Margaret: — die in them days — we didn't have enough money go to the doctor.

Virginia: Right.

Margaret: I can't remember going to the doctor until my kids were born.

Virginia: Yes.

Margaret: I was still herding cows. When my dad finally found out I was pregnant he said, "You get the hell off that horse." *[Laughter]* I did my job— a family with three kids that milked cows — gave my job to the oldest daughter.

Anne: I live within walking distance of this place. So Panera Bread is a place we could eat. I don't know if you've been there. Or, there are other places — let me know what sounds good.

Virginia: I'm a vegetarian so — but I could eat salad.

Anne: Would you like to go to Panera?

Virginia: I can eat soup. I usually can find food anywhere we go.

Anne: Looks like we're going to be lucky. There is a place next to the handicap place. So here we go.

[After lunch, the three drove out to Elkhorn at Garden Highway near Schoolhouse Road.]

[00:52:10]

Virginia: We just passed what we used to call Camp 8. It is called what now?

Anne: RD 1000 Yard.

Virginia: When I was a little girl, there was a big cookhouse here. We used to eat there as well. The work men assembled. All the equipment was there. My father cut tules. We would go there and eat. I don't remember who invited us or how that happened.

Margaret: You got to eat anyway. *[Laughter]*

Virginia: Yes, food was very important. That was when I was living in the Riverside Pumping house, too. Here's a Silva (home). Which ones, I don't know.

Margaret: A Japanese lady lived there. No it says—

Anne: Yes.

Margaret: Well, for God's sake.